## Mountain Streams (59,364 Stream Miles in Montana)

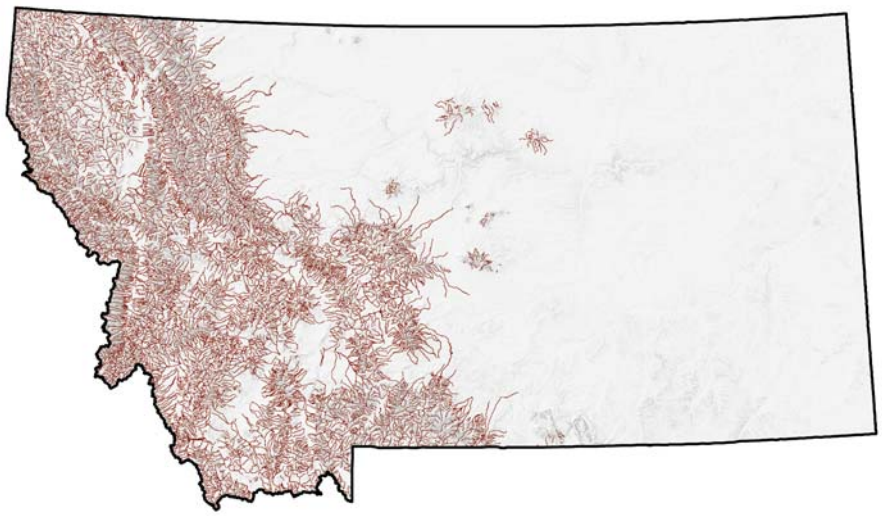

Figure 41. Distribution of Mountain Stream Community Types

Mountain streams of western and central Montana are typically cold and clear, and serve as the headwaters for all major river systems in Montana. Mountain streams often flow through montane conifer forests beginning at the highest elevations, and can range diversely from high-alpine, steep gradient reaches to low-gradient, meadow stream types (Stagliano 2005). These streams are home to abundant native fish species, which are the targets of anglers from around the country. Many of these native species are declining due to habitat degradation, dams, hybridization, overfishing, and being outcompeted by introduced salmonids. These streams support the remaining genetically pure stocks of Montana's Yellowstone and westslope cutthroat and bull trout.

### Essential Associated Plant Community

This information has not been defined for the mountain stream community type.

### Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Tier I Species)

There are a total of 18 fish, mussel, and crayfish species that are found within the mountain streams community type, with 17 of these species being essentially associated (essentially associated species are shown in bold). All associations can be found in Table 44.

**Invertebrates: Western Pearlshell**

**Fish: Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Columbia Basin Redband Trout, Bull Trout,** and **Arctic Grayling**

**Conservation Concerns & Strategies**

| Conservation Concerns | Conservation Strategies |
|---|---|
| Riparian habitats effected by roads, housing developments, and range and forest management practices that degrade the adjacent riparian habitat and stream channel | Support government and private conservation activities that encourage and support sustainable land management practices in riparian areas |
| | Modification of riparian management practices such that riparian vegetation is allowed to recover |
| | Develop statewide riparian best management principles |
| | Conservation easements and cooperative efforts to address human population growth and related impacts |
| | Work with Department of Transportation to mitigate for impacts of new and existing roads and highways |
| Stream dewatering | Implementation of various water conservation or flow management practices that restore essential habitats and simulate the natural hydrograph |
| | Protect instream flow reservations |
| | Increased installation of stockwater wells in place of irrigation ditches |
| | Increase instream flows through water leasing and water conservation measures |
| Entrainment of fish in irrigation diversions | Screening or modification of irrigation diversions or other water intakes in a manner that prevents entrainment of fishes |
| Stream channel alteration | Restoration of stream channels, streambanks and riparian areas to a condition that simulates their natural form and function |
| Introductions of non-native fishes | Programs to help control exotic species and promote natural habitats that support native species |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Protection of native species through habitat protection and enhancement, controlling and in some cases removing non-native species, and restoring or introducing native fishes into suitable waters |

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